

**LYNCHBURG CITY COUNCIL**  
**Agenda Item Summary**

MEETING DATE: **March 28, 2006, Work Session**

AGENDA ITEM NO.: 4

CONSENT:

REGULAR: **X**

CLOSED SESSION:  
(Confidential)

ACTION: **X**

INFORMATION:

ITEM TITLE: **2006 Citizen Survey Policy Questions and Open – Ended Question**

RECOMMENDATION: Decide on three policy questions and one open-ended question for the 2006 Citizen Survey.

SUMMARY: As stated in the February 28, 2006 Council Report, the City is allowed to include three policy questions in the survey. And, for an additional fee of \$1,350, an open ended question can also be included.

Some options that staff has suggested for the policy questions include:

- ♦ On a scale of 1 to 5, rate the value of cable channel 7.
- ♦ Do you think the City should be in the business of providing wireless Internet access? (Yes, No)
- ♦ To what extent do you support giving incentives to businesses in order to boost economic development? (Strongly Support, Somewhat Support, Neither Support nor Oppose, Somewhat Oppose, Strongly Oppose, Don't Know)
- ♦ To what extent do you support reducing services and programs to reduce taxes? (Strongly Support, Somewhat Support, Neither Support nor Oppose, Somewhat Oppose, Strongly Oppose, Don't Know)
- ♦ How do you rate Lynchburg as a place to do business? (Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor)
- ♦ How likely would you be to use the City's web site to perform the following government services: Complete an application, Pay utility bills, Pay parking tickets, Request City services (Very likely, Somewhat likely, Neither likely or unlikely, Somewhat unlikely, Very unlikely)

A suggestion for the open-ended question is to ask a question about how citizens receive information regarding City affairs. A menu of sources such as television news, cable channel 7, news radio, talk radio, Council Meetings, daily newspaper, weekly newspaper, internet, neighbor, co-worker, or insert with City correspondence/bills and other (please specify) would be listed.

Another suggestion for an open-ended question is to ask what services and programs you would reduce or eliminate as a result of reduced taxes or revenue to the City?

PRIOR ACTION(S): Survey conducted in May 2004; February 28, 2006 Council Report

FISCAL IMPACT: Funds budgeted in FY 2006 in the amount of \$13,000. The base price of the survey is \$8,400 with additional costs of \$850 for demographic cross-tabulation, \$1,100 for geographic (Ward) tabulation, and \$1,350 for an open-ended question for total costs of \$11,700. Additional funds were used in FY 2004 to pay for a consultant to help analyze the results.

CONTACT(S):

JoAnn Martin, 455-3801

Bonnie Svrcek, 455-3990

ATTACHMENT(S):

February 28, 2006 Council Report w/attachments: Citizen Survey April 2006 Schedule

2004 Policy Questions

2004 Open-ended Question

REVIEWED BY: lkp

# LYNCHBURG CITY COUNCIL

## Agenda Item Summary

MEETING DATE: **February 28, 2006**, Work Session

AGENDA ITEM NO.: **6**

CONSENT:

REGULAR: **X**

CLOSED SESSION:

(Confidential)

ACTION:

INFORMATION: **X**

ITEM TITLE: **2006 Citizens Survey Overview and Discussion**

RECOMMENDATION: Begin to discuss the topics for the three policy questions and an optional open-ended question to be included in the 2006 Citizens Survey.

SUMMARY: In 2004, the City contracted with the National Research Center to conduct its first Citizens Survey. Endorsed by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) the survey was distributed to 1200 city residents with a response rate of 39%. Typically, the response rates obtained on citizen surveys range from 25% to 40%. City Council endorsed conducting the National Citizen Survey every two years.

The Citizens Survey provides an overview of citizen satisfaction with City services, allows the City to benchmark itself against other communities, and complements the performance measurement initiative.

Staff recommends conducting the survey during late May/early June in order to get results by July 31<sup>st</sup>. Shortly after the results are received and analyzed, staff will schedule a special meeting to discuss the results and appropriate follow up actions.

The City is allowed to include three policy questions in the survey. And, for an additional fee of \$1,350, an open ended question can also be included.

Staff suggests that City Council consider topics for the three open-ended questions between now and the March 28<sup>th</sup> work session so that the survey can be developed and finalized.

PRIOR ACTION(S): Survey conducted in May 2004

FISCAL IMPACT: Funds budgeted in FY 2006 in the amount of \$13,000. The base price of the survey is \$8,400 with additional costs of \$850 for demographic cross-tabulation, \$1,100 for geographic (Ward) tabulation, and \$1,350 for an open-ended question for total costs of \$11,700. Additional funds were used in FY 2004 to pay for a consultant to help analyze the results.

CONTACT(S):

JoAnn Martin, 455-3801

Bonnie Svrcek, 455-3990

ATTACHMENT(S):

Citizen Survey April 2006 Schedule

2004 Policy Questions

2004 Open-ended Question

REVIEWED BY: lkp



## Timeline for The National Citizen Survey™ April 2006 Class

**Legend:** ◀ Indicates when items from NRC are due to you ▶ Indicates when items from you are due to NRC ♦ Indicates information items

Item	Week	Actual Dates
<b>Preparing for the survey</b>		
♦ The NCS survey process is initiated upon receipt of your enrollment form and first payment .....	week 1	Apr 3
◀ NRC mails you The NCS worksheet packet .....	week 2	Apr 10
▶ Due to NRC: Worksheets and additional payment for add-on options .....	week 4	Apr 24
♦ NRC uses the information you provided to generate the sample and customize the survey instrument for your jurisdiction .....	weeks 5-6	May 1-May 8
◀ NRC provides confirmation documents about options selected by your jurisdiction and a sample of the postcard and mailing envelope for your records. ....	week 5	May 2
▶ Due to NRC: Confirmation of options selected. ....	week 6	May 8
◀ NRC provides samples of survey materials (cover letters and survey instrument) for your records. ....	week 6	May 8
♦ NRC prints materials and prepares mailings .....	weeks 5-6	May 1- May 8
<b>Conducting the survey</b>		
♦ Survey materials are mailed		
♦ Prenotification postcards delivered to post office .....	week 7	May 15
♦ 1 <sup>st</sup> wave of surveys delivered to post office .....	week 8	May 22
♦ 2 <sup>nd</sup> wave of surveys delivered to post office .....	week 9	May 30
♦ Data collection: surveys received for your jurisdiction .....	weeks 8-12	May 22 – June 19
♦ <i>Note 1:</i> During this time, you will receive postcards that were undeliverable due to bad addresses, or vacant housing units. This is normal. Please count all the postcards, as we will subtract the number of returned postcards from the total number mailed to estimate the number of "eligible" households in calculating the final response rate.		
♦ <i>Note 2:</i> You may receive phone calls from citizens during this time period who call to inform you they are outside of your jurisdiction's boundaries, or that they do not wish to receive additional mailings, etc. Please reassure them that their household was randomly selected, and while they may receive a total of three mailings from you, they will not receive any additional mailings after that time.		
▶ Due to NRC: evaluation questionnaire and timesheet about the data collection process.....	week 12	June 19
▶ Due to NRC: Final count of returned postcards.....	week 12	June 19
♦ Survey processing and report writing .....	week 12-14	June 19-Jul 3
♦ During this time, NRC will process the surveys, perform the data analysis, and produce a two-part draft report for your jurisdiction. The report of results will contain a description of the methodology, information on understanding the results, and graphs and tables of your results. The second report will include a description of NRC's database of normative data from across the U.S. and actual comparisons to your results, where appropriate.		
◀ NRC emails draft report (in PDF format) to you.....	week 15	Jul 10
▶ Due to NRC: jurisdiction feedback on the draft report .....	week 16	Jul 17
◀ NRC mails final report and data file to you (unless otherwise specified) .....	week 17	Jul 24
◀ NRC mails final invoice to you .....	week 17	Jul 24
◀ NRC mails final evaluation questionnaire and timesheet to you .....	week 17	Jul 24
▶ Due to NRC: Final half of costs of The NCS .....	week 18	Jul 31
▶ Due to NRC: completed final evaluation questionnaire and timesheet .....	week 18	Jul 31



## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Three additional questions were asked by the City of Lynchburg as listed below.

The results for these questions are also available in the Report of Results.

Figure 25: Policy Question #1	
	To what extent do you support or oppose increasing taxes and fees to maintain current services and programs?
	Percent of Respondents
strongly support	5%
somewhat support	21%
neither support nor oppose	11%
somewhat oppose	24%
strongly oppose	30%
don't know	8%
Total	100%

Figure 26: Policy Question #2	
	Please indicate the degree to which you would support or oppose giving public funds to non-profit agencies in the City as determined by the City Council
	Percent of Respondents
strongly support	11%
somewhat support	29%
neither support nor oppose	15%
somewhat oppose	18%
strongly oppose	17%
don't know	10%
Total	100%

Figure 27: Policy Question #3	
	How likely or unlikely are you to use the Internet to conduct business with the City?
	Percent of Respondents
very likely	33%
somewhat likely	26%
neither likely nor unlikely	6%
somewhat unlikely	9%
very unlikely	22%
don't know	4%
Total	100%

Question 16d: What three services could the City of Lynchburg improve upon?	
Services:	Percent of Respondents
Roads / Traffic / Transportation	37%
Utilities / Recycling / Cable / Water / Snow removal	26%
Education / Children and Youth programs	21%
Waste pickup / Weeds / Litter	19%
Recreation / Land Use / Shops & Businesses	17%
City spending / Economic management / Taxes / Job Growth	17%
Police / Fire / EMS / Crime / Safety	15%
City services / Customer service / Ordinance enforcement	13%
Housing / Treatment of Mentally ill / Seniors / Low-income	12%
Other	3%
Don't Know / Nothing	1%
Total	100%